

United States Bankruptcy Court
For the District of Rhode Island

Minutes of April 12, 2001 Meeting of the Attorney Advisory Committee

The fourth meeting of the Bankruptcy Court's Attorney Advisory Committee was held at the Clerk's office on Thursday, April 12, 2001 at 3:30pm.

Attendance: The following members were in attendance:

Lisa Geremia
John Rao
Christopher Lefebvre
Peter Furness
Patricia Antonelli
Sheryl Serreze
David Reilly
Mark Buckley

Court Personnel:
Susan Thurston
Michelle Torres

Absent: Bill Hague, Charlie Pisaturo, Tom Quinn.

Meeting Discussion:

The meeting commenced at 3:30 p.m. and the first order of business was a brief update of actions taken by the Court since the last meeting. Based on prior suggestions of the Committee, a list of imaging courts has been posted on the Court's Website. This list includes Bankruptcy and District imaging court links. Other ideas that were implemented by the court include: PDF Writable Forms, a Local Rule Search Engine for the Website and improved Court Opinions. An email mailing list to announce court news (a listserv) is in the process of development. The Committee tabled discussion regarding LBR 6005-1 until Tom Quinn could be present. Other matters that are still in process are the upgrade to the court's library computer and including a copy of the Bankruptcy Code and Rules in the library.

The next agenda item was a continuation of the Food for Thought discussion. Susan updated the Committee on the various options available with the RI Bar Association. After discussion, the Committee unanimously agreed to co-sponsor a 4 part Food for Thought series with the RI Bar Association. Susan Thurston will get back to Nancy Healy at the Bar Association to work out the available dates and details. **Since the April meeting, the following dates were agreed to with the Bar Association for the Food For Thought trainings: October 2, November 6, December 4 and January 8.** Topics discussed for training: Pre-trial procedures, new bankruptcy legislation, Motions for Relief from Stay, contesting dischargeability complaints. There is also an interest in providing a training to attorneys on accessing the bankruptcy court through the web. This

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training will be pursued separate from the Food for Thought series, since it should be given at the Bankruptcy Court. As part of the discussion, John Rao suggested that the court create a brochure explaining to debtors and attorneys how to access documents after their cases have been closed. Patricia Antonelli also suggested a procedural change in the way motion for relief from stay are handled through the court. Ms. Antonelli will submit a written proposal on this topic for the next meeting in June.

Next, Susan advised the Committee that the Court is in the process of procuring computers to place on counsel tables in the courtroom. They will be equipped with flat screens and Internet connections in order to assist attorneys. Susan also discussed the anticipated renovations that will take place in the courtroom (raised flooring and build out of bench for court personnel) to prepare for the introduction of courtroom technology (evidence presentation system). The court is currently obtaining design specs for these projects and will then place them out for bid.

The next item on the agenda was the status of the Court's implementation of the judiciary's new case management/electronic case files system (CM/ECF). The Attorney Advisory Committee members were given a demonstration of the CM/ECF software. Additionally, Susan will conduct a presentation for the Debtor/Creditor Committee of the Bar Association on May 23, 2001 (**This date has since been changed to June 6th at 4:00 p.m.**). During this meeting, bar association committee members will be briefed on the Court's implementation plans and will be invited to participate on either of the two proposed attorney subcommittees: attorney training and/or local rules revisions.

The Advisory Committee was advised about the ongoing efforts of the Bankruptcy Court, through the Clerk, and Sheryl Serreze, to submit a proposal to Roger Williams University Law School to establish a Bankruptcy Clinic to enable law students to handle indigent bankruptcy cases. Several Advisory Committee members volunteered to assist the clinic once established. As a final topic, the Committee briefly discussed the proposed bankruptcy legislation. If and when the bankruptcy legislation is passed, the committee will devote more time to this subject.

Finally, the Advisory Committee was updated on recent staffing changes at the Bankruptcy Court, including the promotion of Gail Kelleher to Chief Deputy Clerk.

The next attorney advisory committee meeting is scheduled **for June 14, 2001 at 3:30** in the Clerk's office conference room. The Bankruptcy Court will e-mail members the proposed agenda a week before the meeting to solicit comments/suggestions from the Advisory Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.